



April 13, 2022
220 S. Main St. Bel Air, MD 21014
8:00 -- 9:30 a.m.

Summary Notes

Len Parrish briefly welcomed attendees of the meeting and introduced Robbie Sandlass, HC Treasurer who offered updates from Treasury.

The county is working on the budget which will be submitted to County Council on Friday. Mr. Sandlass indicated that the tax base is strong with an influx from cash increases.

Mr. Parrish spoke about Tourism. The EDAB committee will review applications and with \$2.9 million in requests, it is a difficult job to score and then process to the Executive Office that makes the final decision to give out between \$1 and \$1.5 million to designated non-profits. He advised that there will be a ribbon cutting at Ripken Stadium for two new ballfields and that the main offices are moving from Baltimore County back to Harford. The site will hopefully be adding two more 90 foot diamonds so they can hold week-long tournaments. Currently, baseball accounts for 60% of Harford's sports tourism dollars. Along with sports tourism, Coppermine will make an announcement in the next two weeks; they have been working with John McHugh of Cedar Lane Sports. Because of some COVID delays in financing, etc. they are finally moving ahead on all eight turf fields, one will be domed. Mr. Parrish then introduced Matthew Scales who is the new representative for Visit Harford.

Mr. Scales said that with the Great American Outdoors Act, extra funding from the Department of Natural Resources will allow Visit Harford to apply for grants for advertising and marketing to promote state parks. As of July 1 there will be increased funding for stadiums through the Maryland Stadium Authority. This will help to make Ripken facilities state-of-the-art for all events. Also, there is Federal funding through the Economic Development Administration coming to the Maryland Office of Tourism; \$9.6 million in total for the state – some will be divided between Destination Management Organizations (DMO) in state; scenic byways; partnerships; and outdoor recreation to promote the state's outdoor legacy. The first week of May is National Travel and Tourism Week. The Hospitality Appreciation Breakfast being held on May 5 will recognize hoteliers, Restaurant Association of Maryland award and Tourism Grant award winners.

The Economic Development business developers offered updates from their sectors. Shawn Krout talked about his role in covering manufacturing, ecommerce and distribution. He detailed the inventory numbers from Costar and talked about new businesses including Fanatics, Wayfair, The Container Store, and Medifast. Better Engineering, WAVE, and Chesapeake Spice are all expanding businesses in the County. Bonnie Barresi offered information on Retail and Entrepreneurship in the County. She detailed ribbon cuttings and space filling quickly. Harford County's loan program currently has about \$250,000 under management. The County also offers a Route 40 Revitalization Loan up to \$50,000 over 5 years. The deadline for the current round of Workforce Technical Training Grant program is May 20. OCED hosts a webinar on the 2nd Tuesday of each month to explain the new virtual application process. So far, we have helped more than 85 businesses on the webinars to date. Also, OCED is re-starting Small Business Essentials seminar series. The first is Ask the Experts on May 17 which will be geared towards entrepreneurs and small businesses. Finally, at The Grove, we will host a cottage food industry and

canning seminar in the summer. People can learn how prolific this industry is in the County. Lastly, Larry Richardson offered his update on legislative issues and healthcare issues. Maryland Association of Counties takes the lead on a lot of bills. Enterprise Zones will be phased out effective 2030, and the tax benefit will continue to get smaller in the interim. This could change in Session over next seven years. There is a highway user revenue which includes funding for each county and municipality for local road maintenance. There will be a slight, gradual increase from FY24-FY26. And the Family and Medical Leave Act effecting employers with 15+ employees will split contributions to pay for the weeks of leave. The exact percentages and details are still being modified. Finally, he talked about Medicaid reimbursement for ambulance responses being increased to \$150.

Partner updates from Phyllis Grover and the City of Aberdeen included news about 1,200 residential units approved by 4 developers, the office building on Long Drive will become a storage facility surrounded by apartments, new businesses to include an axe throwing business, catering business, and bakery business opening soon. They have also hired national firm to handle marking and promotion for main street corridor and are working on a federal grant for the train station. She also offered a reminder that there is façade improvement money available.

Trish Heidenreich from Bel Air stated that there is low inventory for housing. There is a discussion on high-density housing development with a potential location near the library. The Incubator at the Armory has successful graduates including Love Evolution Studio and KORE Bootcamps. Bel Air also has façade improvement money available, in collaboration with Bel Air Downtown Alliance.

Dr. Bulson (HCPS) said that Teacher of the Year was announced last night. She went to Harford Community College and Towson and is from the pipeline we work with. There is an increase in the investment in our internal professional pipelines. Working on figuring out how to build our workforce. In that effort, currently running a pilot program at the Leading Edge Training Center – first endeavor at career credentials that are not credit-oriented with seniors at Edgewood High School now, but hope to expand.

Mark Shaver (UMUCH) stated that the Upper Chesapeake Medical Center in Aberdeen is going well and on schedule. The office building will be fully operational by June to include primary care, cardiology, and others. Hoping to adapt the Crisis Center to be more appealing for mild to moderate mental health concerns building partnerships and pipeline with surrounding healthcare providers could make the center a national model.

Karen Holt offered a defense update. Aberdeen Proving Ground currently at HPCON Bravo; masks optional and they are still seeing lots of remote work. There are almost 160 defense contractors in the county with no COVID decrease. April 26-28 is the Advanced Planning Business to Industry (APBI). Businesses can learn about contracting opportunities; virtual event this year; also having a no-host social at Hopkins Farm Brewery. Immersion Day will take place in May. County administrators can get a “flyover” look behind the gates. MG Edmonson has been very supportive and engaged in community interaction. Military Appreciation Luncheon with the Harford County Chamber of Commerce will be held on May 19 and the theme is “A look back, a path forward” to analyze what we did well with BRAC and what could we do different with something similar in the future. There will be representation from Association of Defense Communities Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOC) meet-and-greet on April 19. Project Opportunity and military spouse program is currently running.

EDAB Meeting (Location may be virtual)

7.13.22 8:00 a.m., Location TBD

10.12.22 8:00 a.m., Location TBD